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SYNOPSIS

the fact the President of the United States was refused information he requested about our national defense—as late as last fall. I may add that as a Senator he was completely entitled to the information in question, even though apparently there were in the country at that time some misguided people who apparently felt he would not be elected, because as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he had complete access to information on our own military status and the reports of the Central Intelligence Agency, which briefs the Foreign Relations Committee, and makes up the national intelligence estimates of the United States.

I regret that today there are some who appear to be making a major partisan matter of this affair, as we go into 4 years under the leadership of our great new President, just elected by the people of the United States. To those who would try to make a partisan matter out of a difference of opinion on the part of some newspapermen, let me point out the partisanship of those who, last fall, made it necessary for the President to spend more time, after he was elected, in obtaining the facts about the defense of the United States—facts he went out of his way to try to obtain before his election.

Mr. JACKSON. Mr. President, I do not have available to me the transcript of what was said at the Defense Department background press briefing. However, I believe it would be helpful to the American people to keep in mind certain distinctions in terminology.

First, if we are talking about a missile gap, and we define it to mean the difference in the total number of missiles that we have operational or launching power, as compared with what the Soviets have, the answer is clear, without dispute, that the Soviets have more operational intercontinental ballistic missiles than we have.

Second, if we are talking about a missile deterrent, the argument is over the question: Will our overall retaliatory force, including our long-range bomber force, offset the Soviet advantage in operational intercontinental ballistic missiles?

Third, thinking at the present time—I have always said this—is that our long-range bomber force, with the alert force increased, does now offset the numerical advantage which the Soviets have in operational intercontinental ballistic missiles?

With the debate has centered around the question: What it will be in the next year and the year after?

I remember vividly the testimony of General Schweitzer before the Preparedness Subcommittee within the last year or so when he said, in effect, there is nothing you can do now to overcome the numerical advantage the Soviets have in ICBMs, because we did not order them when we should have ordered them. He said that was the day of it.

At this point, I am sure that the Chairman of the Preparedness Subcommittee, at this time, is going to ask that that

was to step up the Polaris missile program and to step up our other intercontinental ballistic missile programs. What better evidence of concern do we have than the fact that the President took this action?

If any Senator wishes to stand on the floor of the Senate and tell the American public that the Soviets, as of now, do not have more operational intercontinental ballistic missiles than we have, and that we do not have to step up our own programs to prevent the Soviet advantage from becoming greater, I would like to have that Senator come forward at this time and say it. It is contrary to the sworn testimony that we have had before our committee from people who seek no partisan advantage. I believe it would be a disservice to the people of our country if the wrong impression were conveyed.

Mr. BYINGTON. Mr. President, in reply to my friend from Illinois, let me emphasize that the first message the President sent to Congress called for acceleration of the missile program—specifically—of specific missile programs, and also acceleration of the modernity and mobility of the U.S. Army. Now again the President has stated in no uncertain terms that he is not of these press assertions. I have already read that clarification into the record. It would be redundant to do it again.

The distinguished minority leader has referred to the Democratic platform. Again may I refer to most unfortunate circumstances. After the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts had been nominated by his party, when he wanted to find out information which would make it possible, after his election, for him to reach decisions with greater certainty, the previous administration, nevertheless, carefully planned and restrained from giving him the information he requested.

Mr. President, I may be a little bit off, though there may be some of those of opinion as to exactly what was said or not said by the President at this background press briefing. I am sure, however, that the request for information was made and that the difference of opinion was made.